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Bonn Recalls Envoy From Libya

Europe Finds No Effective Response to Killing of Qaddafi's Foes

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BONN, April 10—The murder of a Libyan dissident here has underscored the helplessness of European governments in coping with an apparent assassination campaign on their soil against exiled opponents of Col. Muammar Qaddafi's rule.

West Germany recalled its ambassador from Tripoli today in a mild show of displeasure after the shooting of Gebril Denali, 30, in a central square crowded with shoppers last Saturday. Two West Germans were seriously wounded by stray bullets.

Despite public outrage and exhortations to sever all ties with Tripoli, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government has been reluctant to adopt more punitive measures because of fears about possible retaliation against an estimated 1,500 West Germans working in Libya.

Two years ago, following the arrest here of two Libyans on charges of having tortured an anti-Qaddafi expatriate at the residence of Tripoli's ambassador to Bonn, eight West German citizens in Libya were accused of espionage and detained for a month until a swap was arranged.

"We don't need another hostage crisis on our hands," said a Bonn Foreign Ministry official, who has argued against breaking relations with Libya because it would only exacerbate dangers to West Germans there.

"People are terribly upset and want some dramatic action taken by the government," the official explained. "But the disturbing lesson is that there is no realistic way to punish the Libyans without escalating the crisis."

The West German Cabinet discussed the shooting today but ruled out cutting relations, a spokesman said.

Bonn government spokesman Peter Boenisch deplored the shooting but noted that severing official ties with Libya made no sense at this time.

"Our country must not be used as the setting for acts of violence between rival foreign groups. It is particularly reprehensible when innocent passers-by are caught up in these battles and injured," he said.

West Germany maintains important economic ties with Libya, one of its chief sources of oil. In addition, West German firms earn lucrative profits from geological ventures and construction projects there.

Other European countries have been frustrated by the limits of traditional diplomacy and international police work in thwarting sporadic assaults on foes of Qaddafi who have sought refuge in Europe.

Denali's death follows the murder of exiled businessman Ahmed Bahrani in Cyprus on April 2. Earlier killings of Libyan dissidents have occurred in Britain, Italy and Greece. The perpetrators usually have escaped punishment.

Denali's assailant, Fatahi Tarhoni, was quickly seized by an off-duty policeman who witnessed

the attack. Tarhoni was formally charged with murder.

Police said he admitted that he shot Denali for political reasons but asserted he was acting independently.

Libya's charge d'affaires, Ramadan Ayeb, was summoned to the ministry, where he reportedly denied that his government was involved. Police said Tarhoni told them he brought the murder weapon, a Walther 9-mm pistol, from Libya in January on a temporary visa.

West German police said they were informed on Feb. 1 that someone with a name similar to Tarhoni's was plotting a murder in West Germany, but they failed to make the connection at the time.

A government spokesman said Denali was one of eight exiles in West Germany accused by Tripoli of planning terrorist acts against Qaddafi's rule.

Libya sent the list of expatriate suspects to Bonn in May after Qaddafi's residence was attacked, the spokesman said.